



**PROVISION OF
AN AGRICULTURAL ASSESSMENT
IN RELATION TO
LAND OFF YAPTON LANE, WALBERTON, ARUNDEL
WEST SUSSEX
BN18 0AS**

for and on behalf of

LANDQUEST UK (SOUTHERN) LIMITED

Henry Adams LLP Rowan House, Baffins Lane, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 1UA

sales ► Lettings ► Commercial ► Rural ► Development ► Fine Art



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- Appendix 3 – Soils of the Area
- Appendix 4 – Agricultural Land Classification
- Appendix 5 – Proximity of other development land to property

1 INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.1 Instructions were received from Mr Darren Harman of LandQuest UK (Southern) Limited of 24 Picton House, Hussar Court, Waterlooville, Hampshire, PO7 7SQ in an email 10 December 2020 to provide an Agricultural Land Quality Assessment over a parcel of land situated to the west of Yapton Lane, Walberton.
- 1.2 The scope of the work is to comprise the provision of an Agricultural Land Quality Assessment including all necessary research, surveys and the preparation of all necessary reports/documents required by LandQuest in support of a planning application for residential development on the land in question.

2. QUALIFICATIONS.

2. I, Simon Lush am a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and a Fellow of the Association of Agricultural Valuers. I am a registered valuer (Member No. 0079266) and a Partner of Henry Adams LLP. I have worked in Chichester as a rural chartered surveyor acting for numerous farmers, horticultural growers and landowners for over 34 years and therefore I feel I have the appropriate knowledge and expertise to undertake this exercise.

3. DESCRIPTION.

- 3.1 The parcel of land included in the assessment is to the south of the South Downs National Park, located off the B2132, Yapton Road to the south east of the village of Walberton. I confirm that I have made an inspection of the land which shown edged red on the plan attached **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2 The total parcel in question amounts to 2.44.ha (6.03acres), of which there are approximately 1.86 ha (4.60 acres) of land used for combinable arable crops and the remainder being, 0.58 ha (1.43 acres) of woodland/shrub which is located abutting Yapton Lane on the eastern boundary and around the access road/buildings on the northern boundary together with the access road.
- 3.3 The access from the public highway to the land is presently in the northeast corner. This access road which runs along the northern boundary also serves as access to Waberton Place which is being used as a care home and to a set of former agricultural buildings which are owned and used by DM Chainsaws. The access to the land runs to the east of these buildings but clearly is not used to any great extent.
- 3.4 The arable land on inspection was into winter wheat and the land in the past has been used for combinable crops in rotation including oil seed rape, peas, barley and wheat. It was noted that there was no boundary on the western side and land formed a larger field parcel. This explains why the access close to DM Chainsaws is not utilised as access to the field as a whole is achieved from another point.
- 3.5 The land is within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ). I am aware that the occupier claims the annual Basic Farm Payment from the Rural Payments Agency but the land is not within any Stewardship scheme.
- 3.6 There are no structures in the property. Area owned by DM Chainsaws is excluded.

- 3.7 I saw no evidence of a mains water supply or water abstraction so does not have the ability for spray irrigation.
- 3.8 From my inspection the wheat crop had been drilled in the early autumn was clean of weed infestation.

4 SOILS AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.1 The parcel is predominately flat in nature and is approximately 15 m above sea level.
- 4.2 Attached at **Appendix 3** is a copy of the Soils of the Area and I have edged the area red where we have been asked to provide an Agricultural Assessment.
- 4.3 All of the land falls into HL1 which is Hamble series whose geology is 'Aeolian silty drift' and is described as a 'Deep stoneless silty soils variably affected by groundwater. When I dug some holes the deep stoneless nature was apparent.
- 4.3 As will be noted from the copy of soils at **Appendix 3** these soils are common to this locality particularly to the south and west.
- 4.5 The Agricultural Land Classification classifies the land into grades by considering numerous aspects such as the physical and chemical characteristics which impose long term limitations on agricultural use. These include climate, (temperature and rainfall), site (gradient, micro relief and flood risk) and soils (texture, structure, depth and stoniness). The land in question is Grade 1.
- 4.6 Grade 1 is generally classed as 'excellent quality agricultural land with no or very minor limitations'. Uses in addition to cereal crops can include top fruit such as apples and pears, soft fruit such as strawberries and salad crops such as lettuce and sweetcorn. All these types of crops with now the exception of top fruit are grown in abundance in the vicinity.
- 4.7 Attached at **Appendix 4** there is a copy of the Agricultural Land Classification and I have marked the location of the land with a red cross. There is evidence of Grade 1 and Grade 2 soils (dark blue being Grade 1 and light blue Grade 2) in this locality where the dominant productive soils are the Hook, Hamble and primarily Park Gate Series.

5 AGRICULTURE IN THE LOCALITY

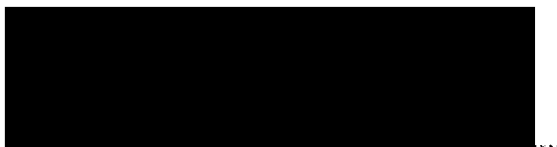
- 5.1 Having worked as an Agricultural Surveyor in Chichester for over 34 years, I am very aware of the farming practices that occur in the vicinity.
- 5.2 The majority of the productive land in this locality is now into an arable rotation which includes field vegetables such as lettuce, sweetcorn and potatoes. The number of dairies has reduced dramatically, particularly over the last 15 years. On the Chichester Coastal Plain I believe that there are now five dairies and 20 years ago the number would have been three times that amount.
- 5.3 Over recent years we have been finding that the size of agricultural machinery has increased dramatically and modern combines nowadays will have the ability to cut over 100 acres a day, therefore the labour requirements are vastly reduced. As a result the size of farming units are increasing where smaller farms have been amalgamated either through sale, contract farming arrangements, share farming arrangements or letting under the Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995 to other growers.

- 5.5 I should also comment on the horticultural sector in that after the War the Government set up the Land Settlement Association which provided agricultural growers with the ability to take on what was considered then as a viable unit, being approximately four acres of land together with a house, pack house and glass housing which was primarily of timber Dutch Light construction. These units were set up primarily to the south of Chichester, Birdham and Sidlesham.
- 5.6 There were other horticultural areas one of which is around the Barnham area and to the south of the land in question there was Angels nursery which is now being developed for a residential use. Hill Lane runs off the Yapton road to the west of the land and this leads to an area that was made up of a number of small nurseries but the majority have now ceased operating.
- 5.7 Within half a mile to the south there is Lake Lane where there a number of horticultural growers including Eric Wall Ltd who established in 1971 on 2.5 acres of land and is now one of the largest UK tomato growers and crops under glass approximately 30 acres.
- 5.8 The principal reason for this was firstly the quality of the soils but primarily the reason was that light levels were better in this area than they were in other areas of the country. There was also good access to markets such as Covent Garden etc.
- 5.6 The LSA units were run on a co-operative basis and thrived until the 1990s when the oil price started to increase and therefore fuel for heating and fertilisers etc. increased dramatically and supermarkets put more of a squeeze on the price of products and therefore margins reduced. The heavy labour requirement meant it was very difficult for growers to sustain a living and unfortunately there is hardly any growing occurring on the ex-LSA units and much of the glass has been removed. A number of growers have tried to expand and look towards alternatives such as the production of bedding plants etc.
- 5.7 In addition to Eric Wall Ltd mentioned above there are, however, a number of sizeable horticultural growers and to give one example, Tangmere Airfield Nurseries located approximately one and half miles to the west grow purely peppers in a total of approximately 70 acres of glass.
- 5.8 The Chichester District Council has designated Horticultural Development Areas (HDAs) in the countryside, where glasshouses and related facilities, including pack houses, may be allowed and the impact of their large size and bulk is minimized. Areas include the old Tangmere airfield site and land at Runcton. The purpose was to ensure that the District's horticultural industry remains nationally and internationally competitive. The land I am commenting on is not included at any HDA.
- 5.9 I would add that to the north on the Downs and along some of the marshland areas along the coast there is some beef and sheep production and naturally these tend to occur on areas of rough grazing and permanent pasture and therefore the poorer quality productive soils. Economies of scale are also a major factor for livestock units. Fencing and putting on of a water supply for small areas is costly and therefore in many cases not viable. I would add that for sheep temporary electric fencing can be used. There are a number of flying sheep flocks that will take on small areas of grass but finding such operators is becoming harder as the time spent inspecting stock is often prohibitive and the income that can be generated is minimal. I would also add that grazing livestock, and in particular sheep next to public footpaths, as is the case here, is a concern to graziers due to the increased likelihood of dog walkers.
- 5.10 I am aware of Policy SO DM1 (ALP) as it relates to the development on Grades 1, 2 and 3a soils. I would like to point out that as will be noted from the above and the attached appendices, most of the soils on the Chichester coastal plain are Grade 1 and 2 and a considerable amount of development has occurred on these soils over the years. Land to the north of Walberton being 400m away from the land in question was given consent some 3 years ago and is being developed. This land is the same series and is Grade 1. Attached at **Appendix 5** shows in blue the proximity of this land to the land in question edged red.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 6.1 I have commented on the general quality of soils in the vicinity which are well above average when considering the country as a whole. The land that I have assessed under the Agricultural Land Classification is primarily Grade 1 and therefore has to be considered as excellent.
- 6.2 However there are some major constraints that need to be taken into consideration. The existing access off the Yapton Lane is small and limiting for modern agricultural machinery.
- 6.3 The adjoining land is let to a third party and their tenant also occupies the land in question. I have commented on the economies of scale and therefore size of agricultural and horticultural units and the total area of arable land lost here amounts to 1.86 ha or thereabouts which significantly less than what was first proposed. Sprayer booms can be 26m in width and the combine header 9.15m. I would suggest that with the size of modern machinery, this parcel of land if looked at on its own is only marginally feasible to crop for arable crops and as there no water it will not be used for field vegetables such as lettuce.
- 6.4 I have commented that many of the smaller horticultural growers have ceased operating and the larger growers have only enlarged their operations and therefore this area is again too small for modern horticultural use. I would further suggest that as the land is not in any HDA the likelihoods of achieving consent for glass on the land is very remote.
- 6.8 I am of the opinion that although the Agricultural Land Classification would indicate that the land is of excellent quality; that due to the site's limitations (primarily size and access) that this land is not greatly suited for modern day productive arable use. Therefore, the loss of this parcel of land as a natural resource is minimal.

Signed:



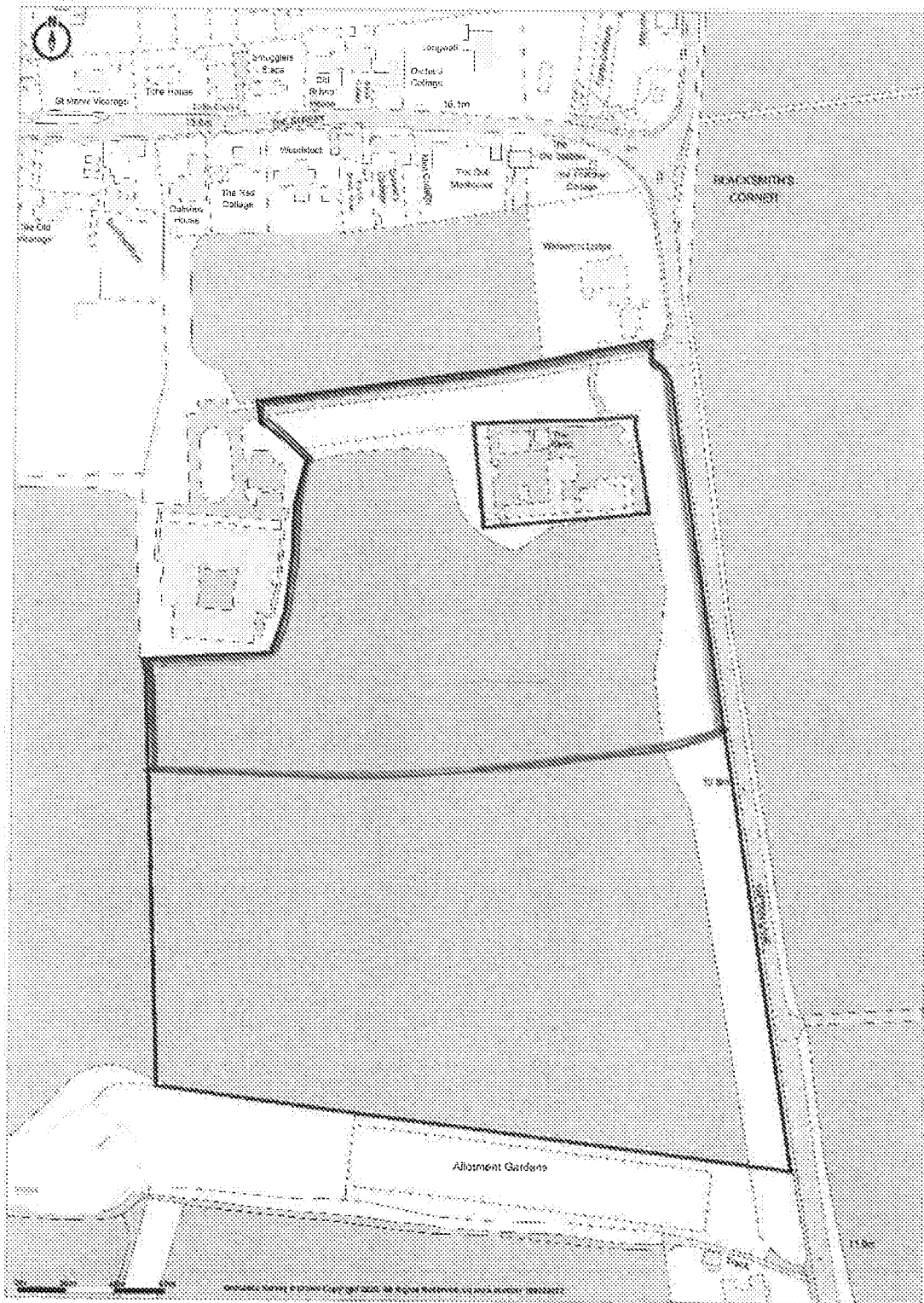
Simon Lush FRICS FAAV

Dated:

13th December 2011

APPENDIX 1

PLAN SHOWING LAND OFF YAPTON ROAD



PromapV2
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Licence number 100022452
Printed Scale - 1:2500, Paper Size - A4

APPENDIX 2

PHOTOGRAPHS



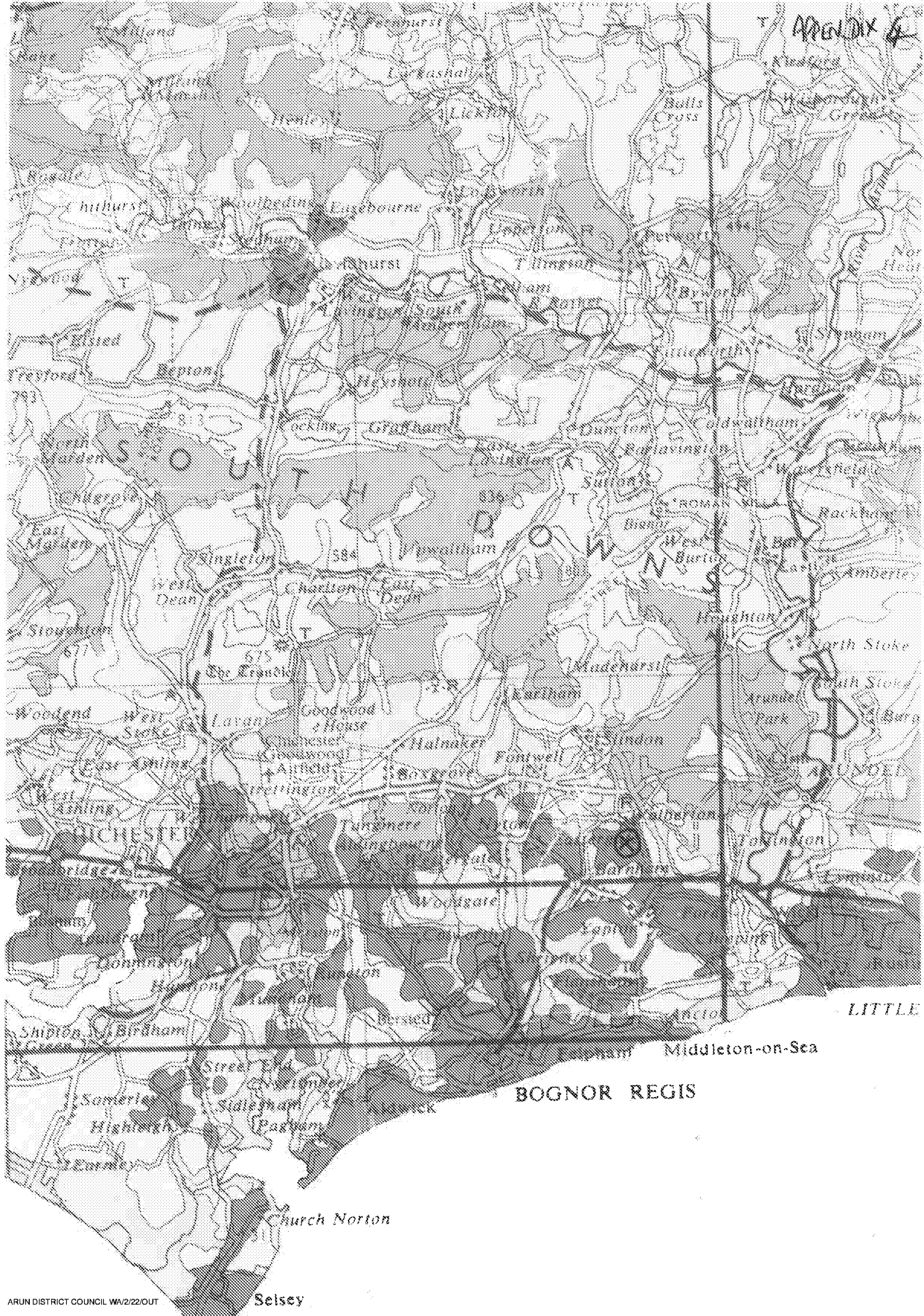
APPENDIX 3

SOILS OF THE AREA



APPENDIX 4

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION



APPENDIX 5

PROXIMITY OF OTHER DEVELOPMENT LAND TO PROPERTY

